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Woodbrooke Liturgies

J. Rendel Harris

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THREE WOODBROOKE LITURGIES

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THREE
WOODBROOKE LITURGIES

ARRANGED BY
RENDEL HARRIS

SECOND EDITION

With the addition of Three Woodbrooke Homilies

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PREFACE.

TO MY FRIENDS AT WOODBROOKE.

HERE are three little spiritual exercises in which our Settlement at Woodbrooke joins from time to time, according to the flying terms, and in harmony with the changing seasons ; one has the sadness of autumn, another the rapture of spring, a third the glory of the summer. Our object in such exercises is to have our inward ears opened to the Voice of Nature and to the Voice of God, the one oracle being, as it were, a resonator to the other, prone to take up certain sounds and syllables out of the speech of the Inmost Mystery, and propel them outward from the apprehension of the Saint into the sense of the Simple, whereby Love, Joy, and Peace may come to be handled and tasted and felt by those who walk faithfully and obediently through the things that are seen and temporal, towards and into the things that are

unseen and eternal. And blessed, saith our Lord, are the eyes that see and the ears that hear; whereby He first blessed the sights and sounds that were involved in His creation, as being in themselves fair and sweet, and then blessed the instruments through which He had designed that the beauty and the sweetness should be gathered into the treasure house of the soul. And because the expression of these things in the language of a common experience is a service which we render to one another, and therefore a service rendered to God, we call them by the ancient name of Liturgies or Common Services, a word which covers many helpful thoughts and deeds in the world, and is not by any means confined to the repetition of prayers or the recitation of creeds, for of these last things we may say that the fashion of the Church passes away, and that which is only said formally, or being said, is said obscurely (because of the prevalence of ancient language and the insistence upon ancient ideas), will soon cease to be said, because the benefits derived from the speech have ceased.

It is common in all such forms of expression to follow, either wholly or in part, the method of Hebrew parallelism which divides any given

sentiment or action between two, as when we say

God is not a man that He should lie,
and make reply that

Neither is He the son of man that He
should repent ;

or when we affirm that

He forgiveth all our iniquities,
and reiterate that

He healeth all our diseases.

That is the pattern on which cathedral choirs are fashioned and cathedrals built, the song or speech which is thus divided being itself older than any house in which it may be uttered. Nay, it is possible to have within ourselves both Phon and Antiphon, Versicle and Response, without any exterior soul or voice to re-echo the thought or make the refrain. For if we were reciting a penitential Psalm, say David's fifty-first, we should be repeating that which was first said in solitude, the two sides of the choir being the two halves of his brain, conspiring in a single penitential regret, as if the one lobe had said :

Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned,

and the other had replied that

It is before Thee that I have done this evil.

Thus David would be his own Antiphoner, as we may be ours. And there is no cathedral loftier, no temple higher-domed nor more delicately wrought than the dwelling-place of the mind which occupies the brain on this side and on that. It is to such a building of God that the truth applies that

None doth build a stately habitation
Save He that means to dwell therein.

Consider therefore, brothers and sisters, in the view of such a privilege and such a promised Land as this divine indwelling doth present, that it is a high grace to be oneself, and let us say of the Maker of a single cell of our brains what Justinian said when he planned the outward temple of the Divine Wisdom, that he had surpassed the wit of Solomon and left his builder's craft in arrear: yea! let us say of the humblest part of the framework through which a divine thought expresses itself, that a greater than Solomon is here.

A true liturgy should not be limited to parallelism nor to recitative: it should have in it dialogue, the mental sharpening of iron upon iron,

as question provokes answer, and, better still, another and a deeper question. Conversation of the best kind is one of the crowning joys of life ; where it is enjoyed to the full, we may well say that our cup runs over, the draught overmastering the measure's brim ; when they that fear the Lord talk often one to another, their intercourse provokes heavenly attention, the Lord hearkens and hears and makes memories of the communion of those who enjoy Him in one another. All that makes human intercourse worthy is on the borders of religion, the sympathetic touch, the delicate irony, the inquisitive glance, and the babbling of mirth. All of these are ours in Christ and His heavenly Kingdom. We must never say to our soul, either in this life or in the prospect of another, what Hadrian said to his fleeting sprite, *Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos*—thy merry quips are over. If we banish humour from our thought of worship, the kingdom of God is not yet fully come. " They began to be merry," saith the Scripture : and they continue therein. text

In the following liturgies there is a Pantheistic, or if we prefer, a Panchristic element, something akin to the exultation of the Sufi, who exclaims that

“ Our friend holds out the wine to us and bids us
drink it up :

The whole world is a drinking house, and every-
thing a cup.”

But any expressions of this kind, as in the Liturgy of the Rose, with its sacramental perception of the Glory of God in Nature, are to be balanced by the two-fold statement,

Thou in God
and
God in Thee,

in order that Humility may keep her place, as the Porteress of every possible gate of Paradise, and we may never lose sight of the Nothingness of the Creature when we are contemplating the All of God. In our earlier stages of experience we are made humble by our sins ; as we advance, by our failures, and when we are made perfect, by our limitations.

It will readily be noticed that many of the passages which make up these liturgies are adaptations of what has been said before, better than ever we could hope to say it : thus in the Liturgy of the Rose, the opening sentence is an adaptation from Tertullian ; the sentences which

follow are from Suso the mystic ; later on you will find strains or sentences from Myers' " St. Paul," from Talfourd's " Tragedy of Ion," from George Herbert, from Augustine, and from Frank Crossley. They are not marked as to the authors quoted or imitated, because the annotation of them would disturb the attention from the flow of the spiritual argument, and turn us aside into byways of erudition from the Path of Life.

The printing and publishing of these little exercises of our common life and worship will take many of us back into circles of friendship which are now, by the necessities of life, turned into broken arcs, as far as the outward is concerned ; but in the inward part, they will revive and renew the sacred oneness of believers to which the two thieves Change and Death are not permitted to approach. For they that are joined to the Lord are one spirit, in Him and in one another.

RENDEL HARRIS.

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THE LITURGY OF THE SKYLARK.

All.—Hail to thee, blithe spirit !

Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart

In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit !

The Scholars.—We suspect that it is almost a spirit.

The Skylarks.—We are certain that it is altogether blithe.

The Scholars.—His ritual is expressed in “ Sursum corda.”

The Skylarks.—He is an incarnation of his doctrine.

The Scholars.—It appears to be a sacramental bird !

The Skylarks.—As being the outward and visible sign of an inward ecstasy.

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The Scholars.—Which God has prepared for them
that love Him.

The Skylarks.—Which God has bestowed on them
that obey Him.

The Scholars.—
Who listen when the skylark sings
Will hear the rush of heavenly wings.

The Skylarks.—
Who follow him with upward eyes
Will touch the gates of Paradise.

The Scholars.—Even Shakespeare tells us that the
lark at Heaven's gate sings.

The Skylarks.—And the Saints tell us that the
blessed and happy soul is in the forecourts
of Paradise.

The Reader.—There are others besides St. Francis
who will hail him as a little brother who is a
great teacher, as a little brother who is a
blithe brother and also a spirit brother.

All.—Hail to thee, blithe spirit !

The Reader.—His music hath an evangelic note,
albeit it is somewhat strange that so great a
gospel can be bound in so slight a frame and
incorporate in so lowly a song. Can the
bridge into the Unseen be carried over on such
slender threads as make up a bird's praise ?

The Liturgy of the Skylark 17

Can the ladder that will reach to God be woven out of a bird's outspread wings, and his "Higher still and higher" be our ascending scale and song?

All.—May his music provoke ours and may we aspire together.

The Scholars.—Were they to talk as well as sing, they would claim all the songful for their company, and say, "Come up higher."

The Skylarks.—They would say that "Shakespeare was of us" and Shelley; and that they had all Saints and Angels to their Singing School.

The Scholars.—One called an Angel, watching over a soul, by the name of bird of God!

The Skylarks.—And what forbids us to call a bird, caught in the very act of adoration, and in the very spirit of exultant content, by the name of "Little Angel of the Most High"?

The Scholars.—Hail to thee, thou bird-angel!

The Skylarks.—Hail to thee, thou angel-bird!

The Scholars.—He is both this and that, by the law of spiritual correspondence, which makes a bird in this sky the type of an angel in that.

The Skylarks.—By the same correspondence, the innumerable company of the heavenly host may be represented by a thicket of nightingales, or an air filled with skylarks.

The Scholars.—Were these to cease to sing, heaven as well as earth would be the poorer.

The Skylarks.—

A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim doth cease to sing.

The Scholars.—We are called upon to sing “Holy, holy, holy,” with the seraphim.

The Skylarks.—We are called upon to sing “Holy, holy, holy,” with the skylark.

The Scholars.—That is a song which one answers to another, high Heaven echoing to high Heaven.

The Skylarks.—We must sometimes be two in order that we may be perfectly one.

The Scholars.—Heaven and earth, also, divided by flaming walls, and severed by deathly streams, are one in Him.

The Skylarks.—

Let all the saints terrestrial sing
With those to glory gone :
For all the servants of our King
In Heaven and Earth are one.

The Scholars.—We sing best when we have some to sing with and one to sing to.

The Skylarks.—O come, let us sing unto the Lord

The Scholars.—Invisible Friend, hear our adoration.

The Skylarks.—We aspire to Thee through the darkness and the cloud.

The Scholars.—Invisible Friend, our songs find Thee, and by our song we lose ourselves.

The Skylarks.—

So sings the lark when sucked up out of sight,
In vortices of glory and blue air.

The Scholars.—Invisible Friend, may no straitness affect our song.

The Skylarks.—And no chill silence our music.

The Reader.—I have seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hoped to get to heaven and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back by the loud sighings of an Eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and unconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weigh-

ing of its wings ; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant and stay till the storm was over : and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel.

All.—Hail to thee, blithe spirit.

Sometimes a light surprises
 The Christian while he sings :
 It is the Lord who rises
 With healing in His wings.
 When comforts are declining
 He grants the soul again
 A season of clear shining,
 To cheer it after rain.

In holy contemplation
 We gladly then pursue
 The theme of God's salvation
 And find it ever new.
 Set free from present sorrow,
 We cheerfully can say—
 E'en let the unknown morrow
 Bring with it what it may.

The Skylarks.—Skylarkship is better than
 scholarship.

The Liturgy of the Skylark 21

The Scholars.—But they may dwell sweetly in the same house.

The Skylarks.—Let us purge ourselves of all complicity with the age-long and deadly infraction of the ethic of the heart.

The Scholars.—Let us purge ourselves of all complicity with the age-long and deadly infraction of the ethic of the intellect.

The Skylarks.—The Lord make us joyful with His joy.

The Scholars.—The Lord make us true to His truth.

The Skylarks.—May Woodbrooke be a home of happy hearts.

The Scholars.—May Woodbrooke be a home of honest study.

All.—O Lord, bless Woodbrooke.

The Skylarks.—

All skylarks that on earth do dwell

Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice ;

Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell,

Come ye before Him and rejoice.

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The Scholars.—

All scholars that on earth do dwell,
Think for the Lord with cheerful mind;
Him serve with love, His truth forth tell,
And leave the faithless fears behind

All.—For why? the Lord our God is good,
His mercy is for ever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

The Reader.—I think this must be the bird that
Jesus wished us to consider.

The Scholar.—The synoptic tradition suggests
that it was a crow.

The Skylarks.—Our Father loves to hear the crow
as well as the nightingale.

All.—O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us
heartily rejoice in the God of our salvation.

The Reader.—Someone has suggested that what
Jesus told His disciples to consider was a
flight of pelicans.

The Scholars.—Whose bleeding breasts reflect the
Cross of Christ.

The Skylarks.—Whose own bosoms are the store-
house and barn of their nestlings.

The Liturgy of the Skylark 23

The Reader.—When we consider them we are
considering the High Priest of our Confession.

All.—Let everything that hath breath praise the
Lord.

The Scholars.—O Lord, according to Thy words,
We have considered Thy birds.

The Skylarks.—And we find their life good,
And better, the better understood.

The Anthem.

Sung by Scholars and Skylarks.

REV. M. MADAN.

$\text{♩} = 66.$

Be - fore Je - ho - vah's aw - ful throne, Ye na - tions,

bow with an - cred joy, Know that the Lord is God a -

- lone; He can cre - ate..... and He des - troy, He can cre -

- ate..... and He des - troy. His sov - 'reign power, with -

out our aid, Made us of clay, and form'd us men; And

when, like wan-d'ring sheep, we strayed, He brought us to His

fold a-gain, He brought us to His fold a-gain.

mf
We'll crowd Thy gates with thank-ful songs, High as the

heav'n's our voi-ces raise, And earth, and earth, with

her ... ten thou - sand, thou - sand tongues, Shall fill Thy courts with

sound - ing praise, Shall fill Thy courts with sound - ing praise, Shall

fill, shall fill Thy courts with sound - ing praise.
Shall fill, shall

1st. D.S.

praise. Wide, wide as the world is Thy com - mand, Vast as e -

2nd.

ter - ni - ty, e - ter - ni - ty Thy love; Firm as a rock Thy

truth shall stand, When roll - ing years shall cease to

move,..... shall cease to move, When roll - ing years shall

cease to move, When roll - ing years... shall cease to move.
move, when rolling,

28 Three Woodbrooke Liturgies

The Scholars.—The great Sun stands still upon
the Mountains to hear this bird sing, with
great humility.

The Skylarks.—

He caught and bound my captive wing,
And still He bends to hear me sing.

All.— For all my life Thy goodness is
So frankly showed me,
That in God's house for evermore
My dwelling place shall be.

AMEN.

THE EPILOGUE.

Sung by Scholars and Skylarks.

My life flows on in endless song,
Above earth's lamentation—
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing,
It finds an echo in my life,
How can I keep from singing ?

What though my joys and comfort died !

The Lord, my Saviour, liveth :

What though the darkness gather round !

Songs in the night He giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm,

While to that refuge clinging,

Since Christ is Lord of earth and heaven,

How can I keep from singing ?

I lift my eyes ; the cloud grows thin,

I see the blue above it ;

And day by day this pathway smooths

Since first I learned to love it.

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,

A fountain ever springing :

All things are mine since I am His,

How can I keep from singing ?



HOMILY ON THE LITURGY OF THE SKYLARK.

WE have been reciting together this morning the Liturgy of the Skylark, an exercise which contains as much of the Woodbrooke teaching, and expresses as much of the Woodbrooke experience, as one small composition can carry; the Liturgy being itself a sort of written-out skylark, over which we may say, "Is it possible that so much truth and reality and happiness can be bound in so slight a frame and incorporate in so lowly a song?"

text Its keynote is the Apostolic injunction to rejoice evermore, even if it should open with a quotation from Shelley; to rejoice in the Lord always is a doctrine that almost requires a sacramental symbol, it is not easy doctrine, it needs the support of illustration well chosen; grace does sometimes look to nature and says "Help me," even though it does not really need assistance from anything visible or made: it says, "Lend me this ray of light or heat, or touch of gentle air,

or moment of blessed quiet, or beauty from the bosom of a rose, or resonance of sweet voices, and I will find my way with them into the conscience, and lay my finger by their means upon the will." An apostle, even, may be better heard sometimes if he has a skylark at his elbow or vibrating its wings in his nearer sky. How such an one would punctuate the reading aloud of the Epistle to the Philippians, and fill up the pauses that, in good reading, should follow difficult injunctions like this to rejoice in the Lord always, with strains of approving melody. "Rejoice in the Lord alway"—pause here, as between the successive ten commandments, which are punctuated by successive thunderbolts, where space is given that fear may find expression over what dread thing has been just said and what is next to say. "Neither shalt thou kill"; loud thunder here; "nor steal," thunder again; "nor covet," rolling artillery of heaven over its impossible requirements; and Moses saying for himself, as for the rest, "I do exceeding fear and quake."

"Rejoice in the Lord alway": pause there, while Little-faith is being helped a step or two up the stair. The pause becomes one of the quires and places, where they sing: "Hail to thee,

blithe spirit ! ” “ Again, I will say it, rejoice ” : and the blithe spirits become a quire of approbation to the apostolic message. They will fly with him from strand to strand, being apostolic birds, and when they have left their witness with his words, in this place or that, whether it be true or not that he himself in person visited these northern shores, they will spread their wings for our more distant times and places and bring us in symbol the message of the joy that does not pass away and of the love that will not let us go.

Certainly it is in the Epistle to the Philippians that this sacramental song, adjunct to apostolic teaching, was most needed. For, if we read between the lines of the epistle, there was some fear that care was elbowing joy off from her high and normal seat, and that “ much affliction ” was having some success in demonstrating itself to be inconsistent with its foster-brother, “ the joy of the Holy Ghost.” Were they sad souls who were ordered in this repeated way into gladness : or were they only people who just wanted the finishing touches of the Divine election, and did not know what it was they wanted ? a people, who, if asked, by Lord or Apostle, whether they lacked anything, would reply, “ Something, but

what it is we hardly understand." Whatever may have been the Philippian normal Christianity we know what the super-normal was to be. And when this epistle has its animate symbol attached to it we know what the sacred sign will be. Those early students of the Scriptures, who took up the four gospels, and reverently enchased their covers with the four living creatures of Ezekiel's vision, whereby St. Matthew took on a man's face, St. Mark a lion's mane and roar, St. Luke the sacrificial aspect of an ox (" work and sacrifice "), or St. John, with solar gaze and eagle flight, might come here and assist us to the symbolism of epistles as well as gospels. Let them tell us what form to give to John in his epistle, when he is not eagle-flying, but only just loving (is it the turtle-dove ?) ; or what is the mounted sign of the Epistle to the Hebrews (is it a woman playing on a harp, some of the strings of which are broken and others are going to break presently ?). Whatever their true tokens may be, we engrave on the binding of the Epistle to the Philippians the outspread wings and heavenward flight of the Woodbrooke bird. For they say that these Philippians, being a Roman colony, with Roman reserved rights, in the

midst of populations made to serve rather than reign, were not slow to speak of the citizenship which they enjoyed ; to whom the Apostle, that he might use even those Roman privileges which he shared with them as a shadow and type of heavenly things, declared that " our citizenship is in Heaven," and what material sign could be more persuasive of a life in Heaven and of Heavenly rights, than the creature of the sky and the clouds and the utmost blue ? Hail to thee, blithe spirit ! Hail to thee, blithe apostle !

But we must now turn aside and anatomize for a while. Every well-made thing can be taken to pieces (at least in thought) and fitted together again : a bird's throat, for instance, or a saint's experience. There must be some reason for this song, and we want to know it. Stay thy song, dear bird of God, and tell me thy secret. And first of all, is thy election to such songs an arbitrary election, which concludes some to be under joy, while at the same time concluding others under non-joy ? May we rejoice in God our Saviour, and does " we may " have " we must " following in its train ? Does the invitation to the heavenly banquet cover more than mere maintenance ; is there " enough and to

spare " even of ecstasy ? Is it only in some collections of ancient love-songs that one reads the injunction, " Eat, yea ! drink abundantly, O beloved " ; or is the relation between Christ and His Church just such a love-song, as the ancient expositors from St. Paul downward have thought, in which each successive stanza is marginally annotated with *Mysterium magnum, de Christo et ecclesia* ?

Thus challenged to explain himself, the dear bird stops his vibrating wings, and planes down (is that the modern word ?) into our nearer air ; and begins to whisper, in delicate sounds, the rationality of his own happiness.

First of all, he tells us that his song is a reflex from a work of Divine Grace within.

Second, that he has a commodity of answered prayers.

Third, that he has an expanding circle of realizable expectations.

Fourth, that he has a sense of fellowship with all saints ; and

Fifth, a knowledge that affliction is light and is momentary, while glory is far more exceeding and abundant and eternal.

In all these grounds of exultation he is so much

in sympathy with the great apostolic teachers, Peter and Paul and John, that one is almost tempted to stop the analysis of the bird's song, and take the apostles to pieces with the question as to whether they could or did ever make melody in the blue air themselves, and if so, what has become of their book of words and music with *Gaudeamus* on the cover. But to return to our skylark and his experience.

The appreciation of the fact that a work of Divine grace is going on in the heart is one of the grounds of Christian song. We are the objects of Electing Love, which has been marking us out for its own, and shutting us up in a corner, where we may be captured, and laying its hand upon us in an act of ownership, or spreading out both its arms in the sacramental sign of a crucifix and saying, "I have loved thee from everlasting," "I have drawn thee in time," "I have acquired thee for my purchased possession." The perception of this Divine visitation causes musical emotion: if we may borrow the language of the Canticles, God has been singing under our window, and we have begun to reply and say, "It is the voice, the voice of my beloved." There are some things in the Gospel which only the imagery of love can properly

express ; and happily we are all of us potential lovers, as we are all of us experimentally loved. After which explanation the skylark moved heavenward for a space, and from the fragments of song that dropped from him, appeared to be setting to music something that sounded like

“ O Love, that will not let me go.”

When he descended again, he was making an inventory of answered prayers, of which there seemed to be no small commodity. They were written out and classified with descriptive labels attached, which read like this : one was marked *De profundis clamavi*, another was entitled *Crowning mercies*, a third was labelled, *Ebenezer* or, *Love in Time Past*, a fourth *Poor Man's Crying* and *The Lord's Answering*, while quite a number were bound together of unanswered prayers, and put in amongst the answered ones, with the annotation, *Things not seen as yet*, or, *Faith Triumphant*. And it pleased me to see that in many of the cases referred to the song was not written merely for recitative or solo exercise, but that it was genuine part singing, in which an invitation was given for differing voices to combine and conspire with the chief singer. Sometimes a prelude affirmed this, like, *Come and hear, all*

ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul : or an interjected note expressed the fact that *many shall see it and fear and shall turn to the Lord*, which seeing and hearing on the part of the attentive " many " was coupled with an invitation to *magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together*. The group called *Crowning Mercies* was peculiarly interesting and contained many lofty strains and much noble singing with clear harps of diverse tones and other kinds of music. Amongst them I saw, and would gladly have heard, the song of deliverance of the Israelites upon the Banks of the Red Sea, with an appeal to the people to *sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously*. And there was a song of the returning exiles who had been by Babel's stream ; it began, *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream ; then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing*, and many other songs, both national and personal, were found amongst the *Crowning Mercies* of the Saints. There was one which was said to have been composed when Peter escaped from prison and wist not that it was true which was done unto him by the angel, a strange song marked by minor passages of

uncertainty and almost of incredulity, but ending up grandly with the triumphant assurance, *Now I know that the Lord hath delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.* I noted also the exquisite little refrain, said to have been composed by St. John, when he was released from Patmos prison and allowed to return to his church across the sea. And some of the songs came down into our own times: there was one which was sung by good spirits in an adjacent sphere to our own over the fall of the Bastille and another over the abolition of the Corn Laws, and one for the emancipation of the slaves. In most cases it was possible to read the prayers that preceded or underlay the songs.

The third section of the skylark's singing related to expanding hopes and enlarged expectations of good. Some of the songs were the outcome of an abandoned theology, which conserved sinfulness in the heart of the Christian hope (as if sin were a Christian's prime necessity) and did the conservation under the plea of humility. The hope had now become higher and the salvation more wonderful. It had been found out experimentally that the holiness which the saints strive

after included humility and did not need the co-operation of sin to its attainments : the affirmation was abroad that sin and holiness being exclusive terms, such as will not finally dwell in the same house, everything gained under the second head was something abstracted from the first so long as the first remained, and the knowledge of this led to an enlargement of the expectation of the soul as to what the Lord would do if we really trusted Him utterly and surrendered to Him entirely. It was no sooner stated than, from one quarter and another, the music began to affirm the expanding hope. One shy bird was heard gently vocalizing as follows :

Lord ! I believe a rest remains

To all Thy people known,

A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,

And Thou art loved alone.

And another broke out in faith's great imperative, where prayer puts on the guise of commandment :

Finish, then, Thy new creation !

Pure and spotless let us be,

Let us see our great salvation

Perfectly restored by Thee :

Changed from glory unto glory, etc.

All these songs were songs of enlarging hope, and of widening vision : while they were being hammered out on the anvil of thought, a body of unseen singers (perhaps those who are called the Choir Invisible) were heard making the accompaniment proper to a chorus in the words :

There's a brighter day,
 There's a better day,
 There's a brighter day
 Coming on !

The next thing that I dissected out of the skylark's singing was its sense of fellowship with all saints. This has been already adumbrated in the Songs of Deliverance, with its invitation to other souls to *Come and hear*, and *Come and magnify*, but here it became increasingly clear that the greater songs involved the Church. A thousand songs were wanted from a thousand tongues, and as the Cornish miner said, " that is 999 more than I've got." But the 999 are somewhere, for the song cannot and must not be spoiled. Indeed, in much of our singing the orchestra is far too small. " Where are the nine ? " said Jesus, when He was looking for a chorus and had to put up with a solo. But in the great redemption, the nine are there and the 999, and

the ten thousand times ten thousand, and they will all be singing presently. And He has Himself said that He will call together His neighbours and friends (heavenly powers and dominions as well as lowly unit souls) to rejoice with Him over single souls found in the waste and returned to the fold. Rejoice with me ! Who doubts whether that is music ? And who can be in the Church and not enter into it ? And in these matters the Lord is as sure of us ultimately as He is certain of the angels. All these great songs are songs in two worlds ; they are the music of a Church below and of a Church above.

Let all the saints terrestrial sing

With those to glory gone :

For all the servants of our King

In heaven and earth are one.

One family we dwell in Him.

The more we live in the Lord, the more certain we shall be of finding ourselves in fellowship with all those who are the men of the same house and under the same roof—the outspread wings of the Almighty.

Last of all, these bird-songs have a wide area reclaimed from what is supposed at first not to be matter for song at all, but is seen on closer study

to be capable of being reclaimed : the wilderness and the solitary place—what shall we say of them ? Shall we put up a notice board with an inscription, “ Do not sing here ” ; “ Wailing permitted,” but “ singers will be prosecuted for trespassing and proceeded against as the law of Nature directs ” ? Or shall we put up this defiant and confident announcement, “ *The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad ; the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose* ” : or this, which I have slightly modified from an extant Psalm, “ *Thou preparest a songbook for me in the presence of my enemies* ” ? What enemies are they that are thus denounced or denied ? What be these deserts that He promises to irrigate, that hitherto have only known the trickling of salt streams of tears to a dead sea of uncertainties ? Where are these supposed irreclaimable wastes ? Are there disappointments which Christ cannot touch, because He has not made them His own ? Loneliness, which He cannot speak to because He has never shared it ? Despair and rejection which have no counterpart in Him, but where the prophet speaketh of himself or of some other man ? Which of our griefs is it that is not covered and coverable by the promise, “ I will be with thee,”

and the assurance that "Thou art with me?" But if Christ does not fail us, neither must we fail Christ; we must be in a spiritual correspondence; and one feature of this correspondence consists in having His joy remaining in us and our joy fulfilled in Him. Thus the wilderness and the solitary place become the Lord's reclaimed land and planted rose-garden, where "from the ground there blossoms red, joy that shall endless be." Even the loneliness of the dreaded river itself is a shared loneliness, for when we pass through the waters, we pass through what is for believers a divided stream; or, changing back again to bird-language and bird-metaphor, the blessed and happy soul, coming to the stream where there is neither boat nor bridge, can spread her wings, bird-of-passage fashion, and leave the dark stream and tossing channel far beneath and so pass over dry-shod after a newer fashion. And so shall we be for ever with the Lord.

THE LITURGY OF THE ROSE.



THE LITURGY OF THE ROSE.

(The Students form two companies, the one bearing rosebuds, the other open roses.)

The Reader.—If I show you a Rose, I shall convince you of the Creator of the Universe.

The Roses.—We bring Him for every Red Rose a heart's love and for every little violet a lowly adoration.

The Reader.—The Divine Wisdom saith : “ I am so beauteously adorned with a robe of glory so delicately arrayed in all the blooming colours of the living flowers—red roses, white lilies, lovely violets and flowers of every name, that the first blossoms of all Mays, and the tender flowerlets of all sunny fields, and the sweet sprays of all bright meadows, are but as a rugged thistle beside my loveliness.”

The Roses.—O Lord, how great are Thy works, in Wisdom hast Thou made them all.

48 Three Woodbrooke Liturgies

The Rosebuds.—Let the beauty of the Lord our
God be upon us.

The Open Roses.—And establish Thou the work
of our hands upon us.

The Reader.—The Divine Wisdom saith : “ Were
a man to abide in a glowing furnace till the
last day, it would be a little price for a
moment’s vision of my beauty.”

The Rosebuds.—

Who that one moment hath the least
descried Him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside Him,
Pleasures and powers that are not and that
are ?

The Open Roses.—

And amid all men bear himself thereafter
Smit with a solemn and a sweet surprise,
Dumb to their scorn, and turning on their
laughter
Only the dominance of earnest eyes.

The Rosebuds.—We set

(To take an image known in Paradise)

The budding Rose before the Rose full-blown.

The Open Roses.—The store

Of rainbow colour that the seed conceals

Sheds forth its tints from its dim treasury

To flush and circle in the flower.

The Rosebuds.—

Sweet Rose, whose hue angry and brave

Bid the rash gazer wipe his eye,

Thy root is ever in its grave

And thou must die.

The Open Roses.—

Only a sweet and virtuous soul

Like seasoned timber never gives,

But tho' the whole world turn to coal

Then chiefly lives.

The Rosebuds.—

Woodbrooke is an opening rose :

What it shall be no man knows.

50 Three Woodbrooke Liturgies

The Open Roses.—

Be it red or be it white,
God shall keep it day and night.

The Rosebuds.—O Lord, bless Woodbrooke.

The Open Roses.—And exalt it in the Plant
of Thy Renown.

The Roses.—The planting of the Lord, that He
may be glorified.

The Rosebuds.—Remember, Lord, our benefactors.
May their barns be filled with plenty,
And their presses run over with new wine.

The Open Roses.—

Remember, Lord, our Wardens and Instruc-
tors,
May their brains be filled with plenty,
And their minds run over with new wit.

The Roses.—Establish Thou the work of their
hearts upon them.

Yea! the work of their hearts,
establish Thou it.

The Reader.—

See'st yon bush aflame with Roses,
Like the burning bush of Moses?

Listen well and thou shalt hear
How from out it loud and clear
Speaks to thee the Lord Almighty.

The Roses.—God is in the midst of her.

THE SACRAMENT.

*They approach the rose-bush and kiss the rose
twice, saying the first time*

We love Thee in God,
and the second time

We love God in Thee.

The Reader.—Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised : great is Thy power, and Thy wisdom infinite. And Thee would man praise ; man, but a particle of Thy creation ; man that bears about him his mortality, the witness of his sin, the witness that Thou, O God, resistest the proud ; yet would man praise Thee ; he, but a particle of Thy creation. Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise ; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it rest in Thee.

The Roses.—Inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te.

The Anthem.

R. FARRANT.

mf Slow.

Lord, for thy ten - der mer - cies' sake, lay

The first system of musical notation for 'The Anthem'. It features a treble and bass staff in G major (one sharp) and common time. The melody is in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. The tempo/mood is marked 'mf Slow.'.

not our sins to our charge,

not our sins to our charge, but for - give that is past, and

The second system of musical notation. The melody continues in the treble staff, and the accompaniment continues in the bass staff. The lyrics are 'not our sins to our charge, but for - give that is past, and'.

give us grace to a - mend our sin - ful lives, to de - cline from sin

give us grace to a - mend our sin - ful lives, to de - cline from sin

The third system of musical notation. The melody continues in the treble staff, and the accompaniment continues in the bass staff. The lyrics are 'give us grace to a - mend our sin - ful lives, to de - cline from sin'.

vir - tue,.....

and in cline to vir - tue, that we may walk with a

The fourth system of musical notation. The melody continues in the treble staff, and the accompaniment continues in the bass staff. The lyrics are 'and in cline to vir - tue, that we may walk with a'. There is a fermata over the word 'tue' in the melody.

that we may walk with a per - fect heart, *cres.*

we may walk with a per - fect heart, that we may walk with a
per - fect heart, a per - fect heart, *cres.*

with a per - fect heart,

we may walk with a per - fect heart be - fore Thee now and
per - fect heart,

that we may

ev - er - more. *f* that we may walk with a per - fect heart, a

ev - er - more, that we may walk with a per - fect heart, a

walk with a per - fect heart, with a

per - fect heart, that we may walk with a per - fect heart, with a

per - fect heart, that we may walk with a per - fect heart, with a

p dim. de - cres - cen - do.

per - fect heart be - fore Thee now and ev - er - more.

54 Three Woodbrooke Liturgies

The Rosebuds.—We must learn to see beauty in men as well as glory in the flower.

The Open Roses.—For in wisdom He hath made them all, and His wisdom is their beauty.

The Rosebuds.—Especially we must study the beauty of the household of faith.

The Open Roses.—In whom dwells Christ, the eternal Fair, the self-communicating Perfectness.

The Rosebuds.—Sometimes the saints are far short of His glory, and cease to be lovable.

The Open Roses.—If our hearts were more filled with love to God and love to all around us, the hindrances which so often make intercourse with other Christians difficult and unsatisfactory would be swept away.

The Rosebuds.—We should pray for more love, and yield ourselves more fully to the love of God.

THE HYMN.

Oh ! for a heart to praise my God !

A heart from sin set free ;

A heart that's sprinkled with the blood

So freely shed for me.

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true and clean ;
Which neither death nor life can part
From Him that dwells within.

A heart in every thought renewed,
And filled with love divine ;
Perfect and right, and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine.

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart,
Come quickly from above ;
Write Thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of Love.

Amen.



HOMILY ON THE LITURGY OF THE ROSE.

WE have been reciting together this morning the Liturgy of the Rose, a composition whose structure is designed to intimate at once the Glory of God in Nature, and the Glory of Nature in God. Its opening sentence is an adaptation of one of Tertullian's epigrams, when at the close of the second century he undertook to confute the heresy of Marcion, which was spreading through the Roman Empire with the rapidity of a prairie fire, and threatening to establish a second Christian Church of an ultra-Pauline character side by side with the Church which Paul himself had been so largely instrumental in founding. Those of you who have been studying Church history will have realized the importance of the Marcionite movement, and I expect that, like myself, you have felt a good deal of sympathy with Marcion in his attempt to detach Christianity

more completely from Judaism and from the Old Testament, which is the text-book of Judaism. We could not, however, under any circumstances, use the Marcionite methods of clearing the ground ; we could not assume two Gods, an Old Testament God who was just, and a New Testament God who was good, and make these two equally real and eternally opposed. Nor could we make the life of Christ begin with a sudden descent into the synagogue, so as to detach Him at once from Jewish ancestry and from Jewish education, and from Jewish prophetic intimations. But then much of the awkwardness of the Marcionite statements is due to the fact that he lived before Darwin, for which he was not responsible, and so could not familiarly express the growth of the idea of God in the mind of man, up to the appearance of Jesus Christ. Consequently, when he set the God of the Old Testament over against the God and Father of Jesus Christ, by a method which he called the way of *Contradictions*, he could not express the contradiction in the language of orthodox thought ; there were two different Gods, instead of two different thoughts of God, and Tertullian had little difficulty in proving him a polytheist, for two Gods is one too many for a

Christian. But for all that we have a secret sympathy with Marcion, and if we could address him in his place of light, for I have no doubt that by this time he is sufficiently illuminated, we should say to him, Come back and re-state your doctrine in the language of Evolution, and we will join hands with you. For we, too, have broken with much that is in the Old Testament. But, as you will see from Tertullian's epigram, Marcion had not only impoverished himself by throwing Judaism overboard, and deserting it, as they say, stock, lock and barrel, by which he lost his Psalms as well as his prophecies, and innumerable statements of Divine Grace along with the severe and arid Law against which he was in revolt, for he had also made the world unintelligible by forsaking the God of the Old Testament, who had been recognized as its Creator ; so that he had now the double disadvantage of an inexplicable Christ, and an unintelligible world. Tertullian brought this fact home to him, or rather to his followers, for I suppose Marcion himself was gone when Tertullian wrote, by the saying, " If I offer you a rose, you will not think of its Creator with disgust " (*non fastidies Creatorem*) ; and we have turned this sentence into the positive form, which

is best suited to Christian evidences: "If I show you a rose, I shall convince you of the Creator of the Universe.' And I can very well believe, though of course I am not able to prove it, that Christians and Marcionites could hardly have discussed the nature of the Deity on a summer day without the selection of a proof-text from either the highway or the garden by the Christian controversialist. This epigram was sure to stick, and was bound to be repeated. It grew everywhere, it was in the Marcionite's garden as well as in the Christian's. Come and see my rose-garden: let me pick you an argument; let me pin it in your coat, let me bind it in your hair, and be not faithless but believing; for the primitive Christian might say in the language of George Herbert:

" But I will not much oppose
Unto what you now advise;
Only take this gentle rose
And therein my answer lies."

And the modern Christian will only expand the statement into the language of Browning:

" O world, as God has made it, all is beauty,
And knowing this is love, and love is duty."

But it must not be supposed that we have got rid of the contradictions which lie in an evolving cosmos : on the one hand the contradictions have, by wider and increased knowledge, become more pronounced. We have not to explain to-day to a modern Marcionite, why the God of the Old Testament sent two she-bears to eat up forty-two naughty children, and the God of the New sent His Son to say, " Suffer little children to come unto Me." There are worse beasts than bears in our outlook to-day. Our fauna is more extended and more terrible than that of the Books of Kings. The God of the past is surrounded by " dragons of the prime," by strange and unsuccessful attempts at organic life ; a plesiosaurus is a worse monster than a she-bear ; and the God of the present world is also surrounded by some modern forms of life that antagonize human welfare ; strong drink destroys incidentally more human life and by consequence more child-life than all the bears of all the species. If it was a real bear we should shoot him, but if it was only a manufacturer of alcohol we should send him to the House of Lords. I had rather be a *Diplodocus Carnegii* than the modern despot and destroyer. So the contradictions remain, even though Marcion be dead and

gone, and it is still possible to say to the argument of the Rose, "I will show you something that is not a rose," and then the old enemies, Faith and Unfaith are at it again, and we have still to struggle for the first sentence of our creed, and say, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the maker of all things visible and invisible." The rose, then, is not the final argument, it does not force faith, it invites it; it does not slay unfaith, it draws away from it. The final arguments will be in another region of experience than that of Evolution.

Now let us leave the rose-garden and go in search of the Christ. Here, also, is somewhat very beautiful which makes one stand and gaze, which arrests the attention whether He speaks and says "Come unto Me," or whether He suffers and says, "Tot pro te." But He is still very inexplicable, and we are very slow to appreciate Him. An ordinary rose wins, at a stroke, an aesthetic allegiance; the Rose of Sharon, trained of its own will over a cross, stretches out its hands all day to a people that contradict its beauty. I doubt if any one ever really fell in love with Him at first sight. Either they said that He was not beautiful and that they did not desire Him, or

they thought Him unsymmetrically beautiful, as being of too lowly an origin (Can the Christ come out of Nazareth ?) or insufficiently educated, or which is just as bad, without the credentials of good education (How does this man know letters, without proper training ?). The only degree He ever took was I.H.S., and that is not academic. And then the audacity of His claims concerning Himself, and His demands for such allegiance as only the very highest forms of love and loyalty could render, have made Him impossible, except for those who are desperately in love with Him, and are willing to say to Him, Thou art my father, my mother, my property, my expectations and my life. More people went away from Jesus sorrowful than the Scripture records ; some of them came back, but not on the same day they left Him. It takes time to find out His beauty, to realize His sweetness and to make the surrender to Him. Often it is only by the direct contradiction that we make of Him that we are brought into the great surrender ; we think, with Saul of Tarsus, that we ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth, and as we do them we are caught in the net of His fiery embrace and surrender to what we denounced and denied. Or

if we have denied what for a time we loved, as though we would not have that to be a Rose which we had accepted to be such on a first scrutiny, and had put it down as wrongly classified either amongst the Rosaceæ or the Liliaceæ, with a magisterial "I know not the man," yet He pursues us till we reverse our verdict, cross-examines us with repeated questions, until at last by the shame-faced expression of the hanging head covered once more with the colours of conscious shame, we are brought by the way of "Thou knowest that I love thee" into the exultant evangelical message, "Whom not having seen we love, and though now we see Him not, we rejoice with an unspeakable and glorified joy."

But why apostles should take this long road, and these slow steps, into unutterable and glorified joys can only be explained by what is not really an explanation at all, *viz.*, that we do the very same thing ourselves. It is, however, a fact that this majestic Rose of Heaven has for one of its titles "Despised and Rejected of men," and for another title, "Set at nought of you horticulturists." Even those who are more carried away by its beauty admit the slowness of their journey to the point of advantage where they

express their judgment, and say with Augustine, "O beauty, ancient and yet new, I have loved thee too late!" It is clear that it was not a case of love at first sight on our part. We may love Him because He first loved us, but we do not always do it immediately.

Still, if I do show you the Christ, I shall convince you of the Redeemer of the world. We are, at least, agreed to-day, that "there is none other name under Heaven." If He is not the one that is to come, we certainly shall not look for another. "In keinem Andern ist Heil," as I once deciphered from a way-side cross in Germany, and as might equally be deciphered from any open page of human history. The question, "Lord, to whom should we go?" admits of no other answer than that which it found at the beginning: "thou hast the words of eternal life: no one else has them." However much or however well the philosophers may have spoken, they are still separated by an impassable gulf from the teaching of Jesus. As St. Augustine says, at the close of the seventh book of his Confessions:

"These writings of the philosophers do not contain the truth that I am in search of.

"Those pages present not the image of this

piety, the tears of confession, thy sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, the salvation of the people, the Bridal city, the earnest of the Holy Ghost, the City of our Redemption. No man sings there 'Shall not my soul be submitted to God? for of Him cometh my salvation. For He is my God and my Salvation, I shall no more be moved.' No one there hears Him call, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour.' "

From which it appears that as late as the fifth century, there was more validity in a single invitation of Jesus Christ than in all the erudition of the philosophers. And if St. Augustine were alive to-day, he would not wish to correct that statement.

THE LITURGY OF THE FALLING LEAF.



THE LITURGY OF THE FALLING LEAF.

The Settlers hold, each one, reverently, a fallen leaf: in four companies, representing Oaks, Ashes, Beeches, and Willows.

Ashes.—The spendthrift wind has scattered the flying gold of the Woodland.

Beeches.—And there are bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

Oaks.—We also, do fade, as doth the leaf:

Willows.—And our iniquities, like the wind, do carry us away.

A.—These annual and multitudinous deaths of nature presage our passing, and are an oracle to the great globe itself.

B.—For the fig-tree will cast her leaves, and scatter her untimely figs, when she is shaken by a mighty wind.

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O.W.—The stars themselves shall stagger, and the most firm foot no more than stand.

The Reader.—Nature is plastic to divine intent, and if we find books in the running brooks, they must be holy books; if sermons in stones, the stones are also among the prophets; and if good in everything, then God in everything. And if our Lord has taught us that He providently caters for the sparrow, and Himself conducts its obsequies, we may think of every leaf as a kind of vegetative sparrow, not wholly inanimate nor absent from that care which is over all things that live and breathe, nor destitute of that caress into which the Heavenly care gathers itself when its subjects approach their dissolution.

Wherefore, if we draw near enough to them, and catch the last sigh of their fall, we may detect in it a portion of that praise whose highest strain is the "Holy, holy, holy" of the Archangels. But we must listen earnestly if we would hear this delicate music, for it is not given to all men. He that hath ears to hear let him hear.

THE DEATH-SONG OF THE LEAVES.

THE AUTUMN LEAF (*loquitur*).

A.—I wonder what has vanished from the world,
It was so bright a little while ago ;
And now we leaves upon the branches curled,
Hang, wearily, just swaying to and fro.
The sun shines on, the cruel, biting sun,
He will not veil one smile to ease our pain ;
What matter that, so his great race be run,
The subjects suffer, but the King must reign.
We are too weary even to complain.

THE FALLING LEAF (*loquitur*).

B.—The desperate clutch at the last weak hold
Grows looser and looser and looser ;
The dizzying leap into depths untold
Comes closer and closer and closer.

Quivering, shivering,
Drawn from below,
Where shall we vanish to ?
How shall we go ?

Leaving the upper air,
Heaviness everywhere,
Fallen on dull despair,
Here we lie low.

THE DYING LEAF (*loquitur*).

O.W.—Let me sleep, it is so sweet to slumber,
All of sweetness that remaineth still ;
Swift the drenching rains and frosts of winter
Rid the earth of worn-out things of ill.

It may be some good there was within us
Will survive this discipline of pain ;
May not die, may change in outward
substance,
May revive in other leaves again.

S. FRANCIS.

All.—Praise be to Thee, O Lord, for our sister
Mother Earth,
Who sustains and governs and produces
Her various fruits with the rainbow flowers
and the grass.

Praise be to Thee, O Lord, for our sister
Death,
From whose touch no man may escape ;
Alas for those who die in their sins !
And blessed they who are found in Thy pure
and holy will
And beyond the reach of the second death.

THE SACRAMENT.

Each of the four companies takes the leaf that he is carrying, kisses it, and throws it to the four winds, after which the following is sung in unison :

Take them, O Death, and bear away
Whatever thou canst call thine own :
Thine image stamped upon this clay
Doth give thee that, and that alone.

Take them, O Grave, and let them lie
Folded upon thy narrow shelves,
Like garments by the soul laid by
And precious only to themselves.

Take them, O great Eternity,
Our little life is but a gust,
That bends the branches of thy tree,
And trails its blossoms in the dust.

A.—There is hope of a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

B.—Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground ; yet at the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

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O.—But man dieth and wasteth away.

W.—Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?

A.B.—Oh ! that thou wouldst appoint me a set time and remember me.

The Reader.— As men from men
Do in the constitutions of their souls
Differ, by mystery not to be explained,
And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self condemned
Through manifold degrees of guilt and
shame—

So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point—attainable by all :
Peace in ourselves and union with our God.

A.—For He that scattered Israel will also gather him.

B.—And to this end, Christ both died, and rose,
and revived, that He might be Lord of the
dead and of the living.

O.—We must needs die, and are as water spilt
upon the earth, that cannot be gathered up
again.

The Liturgy of the Falling Leaf 75

W.—Yet doth He devise means, that His banished ones be not expelled from Him.

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, who art also by Thy providence and by Thy grace Father upon earth, who art worshipped and loved in both worlds, grant to us that neither the cares of life nor the pains of death may hinder our vision of those things lovely and of good report that Thou hast laid up for those that love Thee. Accept our grateful praises for Thy life and the immortality brought to light through Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and enable us without money and without price to come to those living streams of Thy grace in Him, whereof, if a man drink, he shall thirst no more.

All.—We praise Thee because Thou hast set our passing souls to learn from Thy falling leaves.

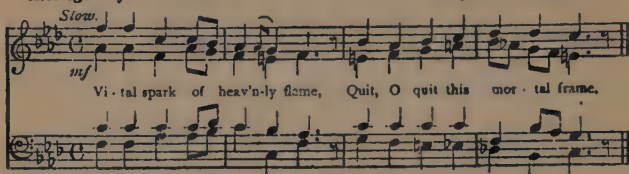
The Hymn of the Passing Soul.

Sung by All.

Arranged by V. NOVELLO.

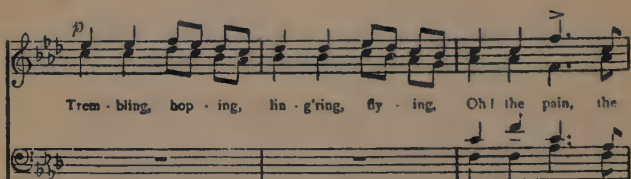
Composed by HARWOOD.

Slow.
mf



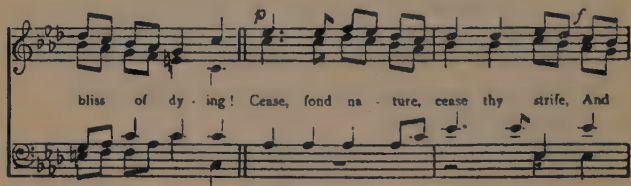
Vi - tal spark of heav'n - ly flame, Quit, O quit this mor - tal frame.

p



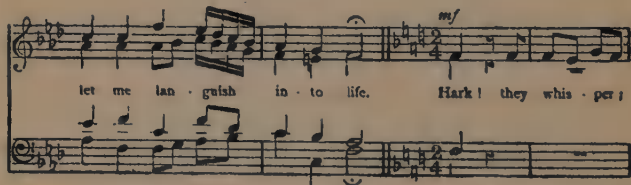
Trem - bling, hop - ing, lin - g'ring, fly - ing, Oh! the pain, the

p *f*



bliss of dy - ing! Cease, fond na - ture, cease thy strife, And

mf



let me lan - guish in - to life. Hark! they whis - per;

an - gels say, they whis - per; an - gels say, they

Hark!
mf whis - per; an - gels say, *f* hark! *p* they whis - per;

an - gels say, Sis - ter spi - rit, come a - way,

Sis - ter spi - rit, come a - way, *f* What *p* is his ab -

- sorbs me quite, Steals my sen - sea, shuts my sight,

pp

Drowns my spi - rit, draws my breath? Tell me, my soul, can
 Tell..... me, can
 Tell me, can

this be death? Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

p

The world re - cedes— it dis - ap - pears; Heav'n o - pens

on my eyes; my ears with sounds se - raph - ic ring.

S f Allegro moderato.

Lead, lend thy wings; I mount, I fly; O grave, where is thy vic - to - ry? O

death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy vic - to - ry? O

death, where is thy sting? Lend, lend thy wings; I mount,..... I fly. O

grave, where is thy vic - to - ry, thy vic - to - ry? O grave, where is thy

vic - to - ry, thy vic - to - ry? O death, where is thy sting? O death, where is thy sting?

f Lend, lend thy wings; I mount,..... I fly; O grave, where is thy

vic - to - ry, thy vic - to - ry? O death? O death! where

1st time.

Da Capo *2nd time.* *Largo.*

is thy sting? death! O death, where is thy sting?

The Liturgy of the Falling Leaf 81

All.—Praised be Thou, O Lord, for our sister
Death.

Silence.

THE EPILOGUE.

O.—The wind that blows can never kill
The tree God plants :
It bloweth east, it bloweth west,
The tender leaves have little rest,
But every wind that blows is best.
The tree God plants
Strikes deeper root, grows higher still,
Spreads wider boughs, for God's good will
Meets all its wants.

A.—There is no frost hath power to kill
The tree God shields :
The roots are warm beneath soft snows
And when spring comes it surely knows :
And every bud to blossom grows :
The tree God shields
Grows on apace by day and night
Till, sweet to taste and fair to sight,
Its fruit it yields.

B.—There is no storm hath power to blast
The tree God knows :
No thunderbolt, nor beating rain,
Nor lightning flash, nor hurricane ;
When they are spent, it doth remain.
The tree God knows
Through every tempest standeth fast
And from its first day to the last
Still fairer grows.

W.—If in the soul's still garden-place
A seed God sows :
A little seed—it soon will grow
And far and near all men will know
For heavenly lands He bids it blow.
The seed God sows—
And up it springs by day and night,
Through life, through death, it groweth right,
For ever grows.

A.—Let Woodbrooke live and not die.

B.—And let not her men be few.

O.—Let Thy blessing be upon our benefactors
and helpers.

The Liturgy of the Falling Leaf 83

W.—May grace, mercy and peace be upon them
From God our Father and from the Lord
Jesus Christ.

All.—And give us all a good ending
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



HOMILY ON THE LITURGY OF THE FALLING LEAF.

OUR Liturgy to-day has been a Liturgy of the Passing World and of the Passing Soul. Most of it explains itself, and the authors quoted can, nearly all of them, be identified without assistance. A few words may be added as a residual meditation.

The archæologists tell us that in the Tyropæon valley, which divided the Temple Hill at Jerusalem from what is commonly known as the Hill of Zion, there are the remains of the arch and piers of an ancient bridge; the arch is named after its discoverer, Robinson's arch, and by means of it the valley is bridged for princes and priests, or even for common people, that they may go up to the House of the Lord. So the thought suggests itself to us, whether it may not be the case that the Valley of the Shadow which we have been expecting to traverse perhaps in gloom from end to end,

or which we may look to cross with a steep declivity on this side and a toilsome ascent on the other, may not turn out to be a bridged valley, over which we may pass in the sunshine, in glad procession with those who have gone before us, and those who may be following hard upon our heels, or who cannot be long behind. Now this is not altogether a new conception: it has been suggested in the Moslem beliefs that there is a bridge to be crossed between the life that now is and the life that is to come; a bridge narrower than a hair and sharper than a razor, off which the souls of unbelievers fall on either side in shoals into the depth profound of their proper perdition. Even if we do not take this mournful view of the destiny and distress of mortal men, the thought that is expressed in the word "bridge" will come up elsewhere, even if we succeed in banishing the artificial terrors of the fanatic: and so when Tennyson tells the passage of Galahad, he brings him down to the great sea into which a thousand piers run, and whose margin on this side is a great black swamp. And the question is whether the swamp can be bridged, and whether the sea beyond it can be crossed: it is a mixed transit by bridge and boat: let us see how the writer puts it:

“ On either hand as far as eye could see,
A great black swamp, and of an evil smell,
Part black, part whitened with the bones of men,
Not to be crost, save that some ancient king
Had built a way, where, linked by many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great sea,
And Galahad fled along them *bridge by bridge.*”

And then, after a little while, the bridge-flight is over, and an unexpected boat appears, into which he steps ; it runs with exceeding swiftness : it not only speeds, the bonny boat that it is, like a bird on the wing, but presently itself becomes a winged thing (the boat-flight turned to actual bird-flight), that soars over and drops down among the spires and glories of the spiritual city. It is a lovely description of a Saint's passing :

“ . . . I saw him far on the great sea
In silver shining armour starry clear ;
.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
If boat it were—I saw not whence it came—
And when the heavens opened and blazed again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—
And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings ?

Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down in the waste, and straight beyond the star,
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl."

So by bridge and boat he passes over. I thing you will agree with me that the black swamp of evil smell is a close description of the fears and remorse and hesitations as to firm footing which often lie in the path of a true believer before he reaches his goal. Even those who will refuse a place in their spiritual geography to the black swamp, will speak of "death's cold sullen stream," which is almost as threatening, and makes a bridge just as much a desideratum. So we begin looking about in the bank, after the manner in which Robinson searched about in the Tyropæon valley, to see whether there is any suggestion of a bridge that has been, is, or will be available to them that would pass over. As we are searching into the matter, our old friend John Bunyan comes up to us. He sees us looking about, touches us on the arm, and tells us plainly that there is no bridge. "Betwixt (the Pilgrims) and the Gate (said he) is a River, but there is no bridge to go over; the River was very deep; at

the sight therefore of this River, the Pilgrims were much stunned, but the men that were with them said, You must go through or you cannot come at the Gate." He goes on to say that "the Pilgrims began to enquire if there was no other way to the Gate." Naturally we enter on the same quest. Our method of enquiry is a little different from theirs. We are not speculating as they did over Enoch and Elijah: but we ask the simple question, "If there is no bridge, how did the people on the other side actually get over?" The answer to that in the first instance lies in the words Ford and Ferry. The nomenclature of our own country suggests to us that one kind of transit frequently leans historically on another: for instance, if one wanted to motor from Birmingham to York, we do wisely to avoid Sheffield and go round by *Ferrybridge*; the name will tell you at a glance that transit by boat has been replaced by transit by road: it was a *ferry*, it is now a *bridge*. In the same way, if you were to find a place called *Bridgeford*, you would say that before people had a bridge by which to cross, they used to ford the stream, and the bridge stands at the very place of the ford. I suppose a parallel case would be that of *Fordingbridge*.

When in the history of England one comes to a battle at Stamford Bridge, one learns again that the original Stamford has been replaced by a bridge. Not only is the name pleonastic, but it shows how carefully people used to mark the nature of the bottom of the stream that had to be crossed ; Stamford is for Stain-ford, or Stoneford ; and you would be surprised at the number of Stanfords or Stanforths on the English map.

To return to our enquiry, (1) we want to know, if there is no bridge, is there a ferry ? and (2) if there is no ferry, is there a ford ? in connection with which there emerges the third question, (3) if there is a ford, what kind of bottom has it ?

In answer to the first question, I notice that the idea of a ferry is one that has been much in the minds of early Greek and Roman peoples, especially in times when, perhaps, bridges were unknown. They had a ferry and a ferryman. His name was Charon ; for a trifling consideration, laid in the mouth of a departed person, he would take you across ; no return tickets ; that is a very early religious deduction. Nor will he take one over before the time, we should be too heavy for the boat. You will remember how angry he was at having to take Dante across with Virgil, and how

he had to be told plainly that what was being done was under the highest sanction. Very naturally he was described as hideously ugly, and so made one more terror of death to the minds of the ancients. In John Bunyan's time Charon was a forgotten figure, but he does not say there is no ferry, and no ferryman. On the contrary, he describes the possible ferryman in one of the most terrible passages in his great book, where self-deception is carried on by someone named Ignorance (a brisk lad in many ways) up to the very last. "I turned my head to look back and saw Ignorance come up to the River-side; but he soon got over and that without half the difficulty which the other two men met with. For it happened that there was then in that place one Vain-hope, a Ferryman, that with his boat helped him over; so he, as the other, I saw did ascend the hill to come up to the Gate, only he came alone; neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement." This is terrible, and it is not all imagination: it is not more terrible than the description of the proud in the seventy-third Psalm, who are "not in trouble like other men, nor are they plagued like other men, . . . there are no bands in their death, also their

strength is firm. . . . O God, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image, as a dream when one awaketh." John Bunyan never said anything more terrible than that. To have no one to meet us is terrible enough, but to have God against us on the further side, is more fearful still. John Bunyan's solution of the Death-transit is that there is no bridge, nor any trustworthy boat, and so we must take to the water and try to find the ford.

Tennyson's solution differs from this: he does not discard the boat; he retains the boat and adds the harbour-bar. He was almost in the boat, and he was in sight of the bar when he gave us his revelation in the form of a Soul's Last Prayer. He looked anxiously for a moment at the barometer, then doubtfully at the sea, then trustfully at the deck-house and the Captain's cabin, which seemed to be occupied. Then he said, I will go pray, for it is eventide, and large Hesper glitters already on the Western wave. "Sunset and evening star, And one clear call for me."

To return to the question of the ford, that is of the ford and the depth and the bottom. Let the fears speak first and let the faith speak afterwards. Perhaps the fears would speak somewhat

in the language of one of the most perplexing of the recently found Odes of Solomon :

“ Great rivers are the power of the Lord : they carry headlong those that despise Him and entangle their paths : and they sweep away their fords and catch their bodies and destroy their lives ; for they are more swift than lightning, and more rapid.” You hear the fears talking, now hear the faith. “ Those who cross them in faith are not moved : those who walk on them without blemish shall not be afraid. . . . The Lord has bridged them by His word : He walked and crossed them on foot : . . . A way has been appointed for those that cross after Him and who adhere to His faith.”

I wish someone could give us an adequate versification of this lovely Psalm ; for I am inclined to believe that it is a hymn for the Passing Soul, based on our Lord's promise in the prophet, “ When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ” : and if so, it is the only composition of the kind in the early Christian literature. A living church could hardly have been long without some such compositions, even if the thought of Death was overmastered by that of the Parousia ; they must have said, “ Be

near me Lord when dying " long before St. Bernard's day : they could not have left it to the nineteenth century to chant the lines

" When ends life's transient dream."

The deaths of the early Christian days were not all martyr-deaths ; there must have been many precious souls, who stepped out very quietly into waters which they had prayed the Lord by His Galilean grace to still ; many who coveted, like Tennyson, and like ourselves, the " tide that moving seems asleep " : some went home by Fire-gate and some by Flood-gate ; some no doubt like Mr. Standfast in the Pilgrim's Progress, found that " there was a great calm at that time in the River, therefore, when he was about half-way in he stood awhile and talked to his companions that waited on him thither." And this last experience is, perhaps, the best of all. For

Many waters go softly dreaming

On to the sea ;

But the River of Death floweth softest

For thee and me.

We have trod the sands of the desert

Under a burning sun ;

O sweet will the touch of the waters be

To feet whose journey is done.

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Unto Him whose love has washed us,
Whiter than snow,
We shall pass through the shallow River,
With hearts aglow.

For, as John Bunyan says, " You shall find it deeper or shallower, according as you believe in the Lord of the place." And as to the nature of the ford, I hear one of his saints saying, I feel the bottom and it is good. If anyone thinks this is too optimistic, or too theological (there is no real optimism without sound theology), such an one can fall back on Robert Browning and *Prospice* ; only I note that there is not one of John Bunyan's heroes or heroines of whom it can be fairly said that

Death bandaged their eyes and forbore,
And let them creep past.

To go over not much above dry shod is not quite the same thing.

For the Lord's voice on the waters
Lingereth sweet :
He that is washed needeth only
To wash his feet.

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